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Subject EPA Negotiates Landmark International Pollution Agreement

Hello everyone,

Just hours ago an agreement was signed between EPA and Teck Cominco for completing a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) for the Upper Columbia River. You can read the full agreement by following the link at the bottom of the press release below.

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News for Release: Friday, June 2, 2006

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

USEPA SF



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## **EPA Negotiates Landmark International Pollution Agreement**

Contact: Jennifer Wood, (202) 564-4355 / [wood.jennifer@epa.gov](mailto:wood.jennifer@epa.gov)

(Northport, WA - June 2, 2006) After several years of legal wrangling and negotiations, the Bush Administration and the world's largest zinc producer have reached an international agreement to investigate contamination in the Upper Columbia River in northeast Washington state. Under this landmark agreement, Teck Cominco will fund and perform an EPA-monitored assessment of decades of past pollution in the river running downstream from Canada into U.S. waters. This study is the initial step in the clean-up process.

"With this historic agreement, we have moved from opposite sides of the table to sit down together as environmental problem solvers," said Michael Bogert, EPA's Regional Administrator for the Northwest. "By delivering results through cooperation over confrontation, the Bush Administration is avoiding years of inefficient litigation and beginning the restoration of the river basin."

The agreement calls for Teck Cominco to assess the environmental contamination caused by the company's smelter operations in Trail, British Columbia, just 10 miles north of the U.S. border in northeast Washington state. This Upper Columbia basin is a National Recreation Area visited by more than 1.5 million people annually. The multi-year study will assess risks from contamination to both people and the environment, and covers 150 river miles from the Canadian border downstream to the Grand Coulee Dam.

The agreement is fully enforceable and is consistent with U.S. Superfund models and policy.

Under the agreement, the company will complete a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study consistent with U.S. Superfund law. In addition, EPA retains full oversight authority for the duration of the study.

The company agrees to fully fund the multi-year study to its completion and to pay federal oversight costs up front. In addition the agreement provides for state and tribal involvement throughout the study and \$1.1 million in annual funding for their participation. The company will place \$20 million in escrow to provide financial assurance.

EPA began its assessment in the Upper Columbia River in 2000 following a petition by the Colville Confederated Tribes.

Additional information will be available after 4:00 p.m. EST at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/newsroom/pdf/teckcominco.pdf>